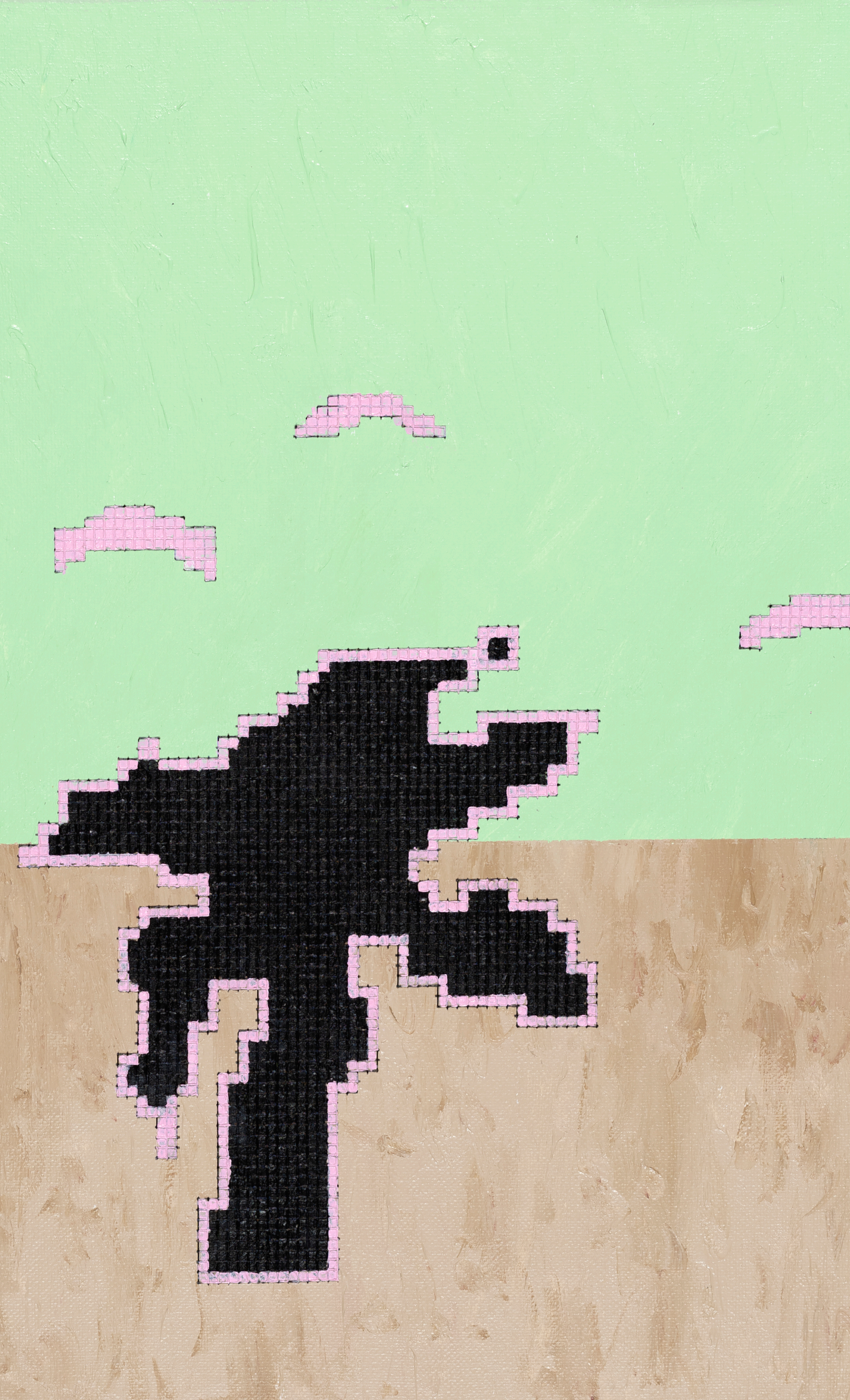


# miniMAG

*issue152*  
*floating methodology*





a child  
placed  
before  
natural  
phenomena  
which impress  
her like a  
fairy tale

Ida Jonsson Renman

$$\frac{dE}{dx d\omega} = \frac{e^2}{4\pi} \mu(\omega) \omega \left( 1 - \frac{c^2}{v^2 n^2(\omega)} \right)$$

Working in a nuclear plant has turned out to be the biggest impediment to dating so far. Some are fascinated but turned off by the masculinity, the weirdness. Some make a face, say something about the environment.

I say there are no carbon emissions—

I say we need clean energy to be less dependent on oil—

I say—I say I’m a physicist, which some people think means doctor, and I don’t correct them.

Before I leave for the day, I like to look at the reactor glowing far below. Would the light flicker if I swam there? Would it welcome me? The railing stops me, guides me away.

I drive to the ocean instead. Swimming in the dark water is more dangerous than swimming in the cooling water from the nuclear plant

could ever be. The water is shallow, shallow, shallow then suddenly deep. It embraces me.

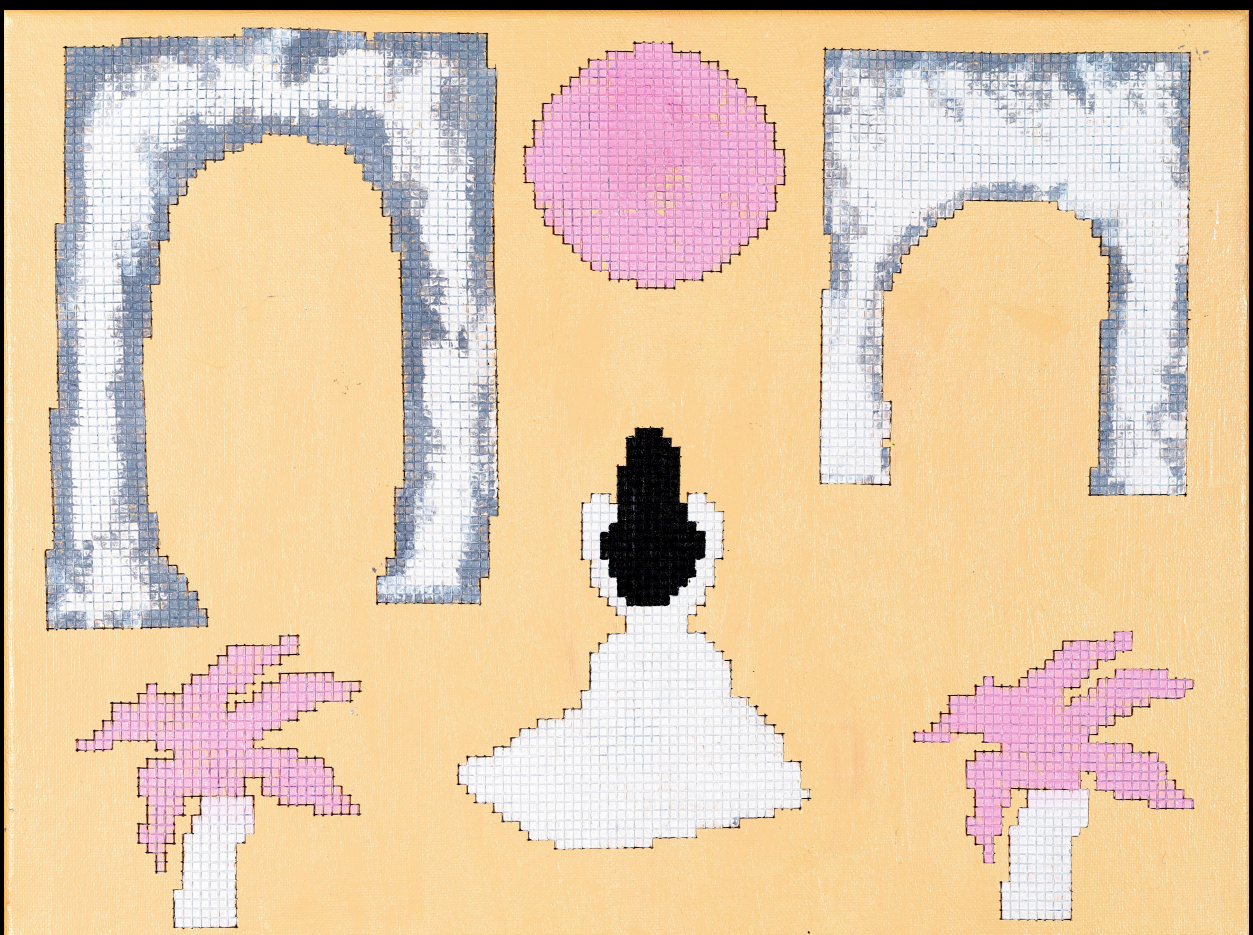
Marie Curie was the first person to notice light coming from a radium solution, a pale, blue light like winter. She thought it was phosphorescence, which is not the same thing as bioluminescence, the light that flickers in the sea when I go swimming after a late shift. My electric car hums through the night and I think of the fusion reaction as night passes outside the window and the ocean nears. Bioluminescence is only visible in the dark.

I dream of drinking the cooling water from the plant and glowing blue. I wake up annoyed, because it's scientifically incorrect. There is no compound in the water that glows, it is a reaction. Still, the feeling of glowing blue follows me through the day. That night in the ocean, as bioluminescence swirls around me, I glow along.

The light around the reactor is called Cherenkov radiation and it is neither phosphorescence nor bioluminescence. It is caused by particles moving through the cooling water faster than light does—like a visual sonic boom, is how I would explain it if I was on a date and they asked me. They don't.

I dream of Marie Curie, her fingers trailing down my back leaving luminescent traces. She enjoyed swimming. We would have gone into the waves together, the stars coming alive.

That night, the railing creaks beneath my weight.



## Diving Bell

Damon Hubbs

*“The other day I saw  
the corpse of Emily Dickinson floating up the  
Charles River.”*

—Jack Spicer

Lulu, is it true, did you find the Boston Newsletter  
in a lavatory loved by poets  
or was it in the cloakroom at the Fontainebleau  
I hear you crashed the Ladies Lunch  
dreaming like Venus in a diving bell  
key bumps and bibelots, wholeheartedly—  
Lulu didn’t blush, and I didn’t stare at the wounds  
Lulu says things like thee and thou and cipressaia  
She journeys little hells to buy fashion magazines  
O Lulu my love my lung  
The curved and cornerless afternoons  
when we drink gin in lobby bars  
I chip my tooth and fish fall out aquarium’d in gold  
Lulu, you wear me like a coat of arms

and then fall and break your sonnet  
Those little literary rags  
say our poems lack quietness  
I’m green to the gills with the Berkeley Renaissance  
Now we scream in elevators till we bend  
Let’s go go go beat off to Tiger Beat  
Let’s pull out all the stops poolside  
ballast like paper nautili, sip peppermint frappé  
Let’s not be lonely  
O Lulu my love my lung  
Let’s salvage the ship that exploded and sunk  
blocking the Charlestown harbor  
All our leaving and coming back will be gone  
in a minute more.





## how to measure time

Jamie Lim

Time's an endurance  
runner that slows down without  
something to race toward.



## Experiment with Certainty

Noam Hessler

### *Symbolic Allegory*

Samsa awakes as a monstrous panther.  
Its sweet breath-smell draws dogs from the patch  
Of undeveloped grass by the family apartment. Samsa  
Sits, admires its soft mouth and ardent muzzle.  
Rolls over in bed, again, again, sleeps. Dogs pawing  
(Samsa's sister caught them pawing while she  
Studied her school books — geometry, astronomy,  
Teleology),  
Its ears prick. It was a great asset  
To its family, it thinks. It fears  
That if this ends it will be a burden. Never a  
Child. Bears from the zoo now, pigeons, all pawing  
On threetoed feet. Samsa cannot deny what it is, &  
What it is is His act — the luring of the dogs,  
& Too those things that pad on madedog feet.  
Little choice in this affair, but when He awakes,  
When it,  
If it chooses, it will be donned as habit.

OOO

### *Nonrepresentational Language*

I feel most secure in things  
I have not lived but have experienced

Received words theories  
Or stories told by strangers I suppose  
Carried in the body in an aqueous cavity  
Descartes's place for the soul I suppose

Methodology: see how many things in my life  
Have best been explained by others people who  
Haven't lived — repeat the process  
See how the words of yourself make sense  
When repeated this way



There is a house of knowledges  
Walk into the house of clear and demarcated things  
Sometimes nuances smaller demarcations — antlike  
Stilling in their glass jars the house  
Is an aqueous cavity

///

Failed experiment a life walks back in  
Lays its pack and heavy woolen coat at a slant  
On the sofa places its webbed or feathered paw  
Upon my shoulder its status secure

ooo

*Testament*

Oh  
Let there be a power strong as light,  
Let that power move through me for a brief and  
Rigorous moment,  
Find the source of the rock again;  
Coarse, necessary vault of the firmament Oh, let  
Doubt throw itself on the rocks again  
The birds making hazy little circles in the carpet  
Of the sky above.





# Private Fight

Len Slatest

I threw a right hook that landed on my left cheek. My left arm fought back but overswung, knocking me off balance. I plunged to the pavement. The impact pounded my right side.

A friend watching this muttered, “What the fuck...” but he didn’t get it. There comes a time when you’ve had enough and have to fight back.

Then I became really incensed. Adrenalin flowing, I leapt to my feet and pulled the left arm toward me, trying to bite it. That would put it out of commission! But it caused my inside left elbow to jerk reflexively, walloping my loose front tooth and knocking it out of its socket. Blood ran down my lower lip.

Instantly enraged, I ran to the police station. There was a woman sitting in a room with a glass front wall. “Yes, what can I do for you?”

I spoke into the microphone. “I’ve been criminally assaulted!”

“By whom?”

My right hand pointed to my left hand, and my left to my right.

“What is this?”

“This is serious, that’s what it is. Do your damn job. Arrest this man!”

“Sir, I’m very busy. And do you know you’re bleeding? Take care of that.”

“I didn’t come here for a diagnosis.”

“Step out.”

“Whattya’ mean by that?”

“*Leave the premises.*”

“I demand justice!”

“If you don’t go you’ll be escorted out.”

I’m a rational man. There was no point arguing with a brick wall, so I left.

I went back home, returning to the station’s parking lot with a bat. Took a good swing at the right headlight of one of the police cars parked there. It shattered perfectly. The Crown Victoria’s security alarm blared.

A cop sitting in one of the cars about to leave on patrol bounded out with gun drawn.

“Drop the bat and put your hands up over your head!”

Once we were behind bars I let him have it. “What the hell were you thinking? At least I can comprehend why you’d want to get *me* here, but you, too? What does *that* accomplish?”

“If that’s the price to get you where you belong I’ll pay it.”

“Cut off your nose to spite your face.”

“Don’t give me ideas.”

Our only jailmate Mel called over to a cop outside the cell.

“Yeah. Whattya’ want?”

Mel didn’t think so but I could hear him whispering. “I don’t wanna’ be here with this dude. Can you move me?”

“This isn’t the Hilton.”

There was a bunk bed on each side of the room. Mel resignedly sat down on his, and we on ours. He watched us like a hawk.

“I want the top bed.”

“Why, so you can roll around and make it creak all night? I’ll never get any sleep.”

“Like you won’t do that on the lower bed? Sound doesn’t only migrate downward.”

“I’ve had a long day, and you’re the only reason I’m here. I’m not asking you, I’m telling you!”

My right foot ascended two rungs of the steel ladder attached to the bed, only to have my left foot pull down. I must have looked like a man climbing and descending the ladder, all at once. The action pulled on my crotch. God, it hurt.

I fell to the floor, at least on my left side this time. I’d rather have two lightly bruised sides than one severely bruised and painful.



It's not as though I was enjoying this. God knows I'd looked for a way out.

I had sought a diagnosis from a psychic. She concluded I was possessed by the ancient Egyptian demon Apophis.

A psychiatrist told me I suffered from a dissociative disorder.

I visited the *Institute of Quantum Mechanics*. They bandied me about and finally a sympathetic physicist met with me.

He stared at me as though looking into the heart of the Milky Way. "It's almost as though you exist in a superposition of states, that your wave function hasn't collapsed."

He corrected himself. "Of course technically there's only one wave function, of the universe. But it's fair enough to refer to 'your' wave function, since it seems virtually isolated from the environment. But I don't see how that can be, given that you're macroscopic."

Finally, I tried a painter. He told me I was trapped in an abstract world of existentialist angst.

So did I need an exorcist, a psychotherapist, more interaction with the environment, or could I paint my way out of this?

The guard put the light out. I was sure Mel didn't want to talk to me, and I didn't want to talk to the other guy, so I just lay there, ignoring the pain on my sides and thinking, reminiscing.

At one time, I had fit into the world around me as snugly as two five-can rows of beer cans at the bottom of a supermarket carry basket. I'd had a wife, kids, was a member of the PTA, volunteered for extra duty at work (whether or not it came with extra pay) and generally schmoozed like nobody's business, all without a complaint from me. Ever.

And now here I was, divorced, my kids embarrassed by me, and on probation at work: forced to take unpaid leave, with a guarantee I'd lose my job by summer's end if I didn't get my act together.

I suddenly had an idea.

When I got out of this current mess, I would go away to spend time in the woods, alone. I'd always heard nature was healing.

It would be lonely, especially compared to the socialness of my earlier life, but if, *if* it worked, at least I'd have one person to keep me company, someone I didn't have now.

For once, my other half agreed. After all, he was suffering too, and willing to grasp at straws.

So that's what I eventually did. I bought supplies and drove my small trailer deep into the woods. I stayed there for two months, for the first time in my life growing a moustache, and unkempt beard.

It wasn't easy, and at times it was scary. But I did enjoy being directly in contact with creation.

Over time, he and I found ourselves in agreement more often. We fought less.

Yesterday, near the end of the second month, we were running low on supplies, so I began frying hamburgers for the fourth night in a row, repetition he loudly hated. I placed the meat with oil in the pan and it started to sizzle until its aroma filled our entire cramped space. I braced myself.

Nothing happened. He was silent. It was oppressive, more unbearable than his yelling, the wait for it all to begin. It gave me agita.

I had to bring it to a head, get it over with already, so I declared, “I don’t give a damn if you want these or not. Eat them or starve. It’s your choice!”

I closed my eyes, even held my breath to listen as carefully as I could.

There was no reply.

Finally, after many months of hell, he was gone.

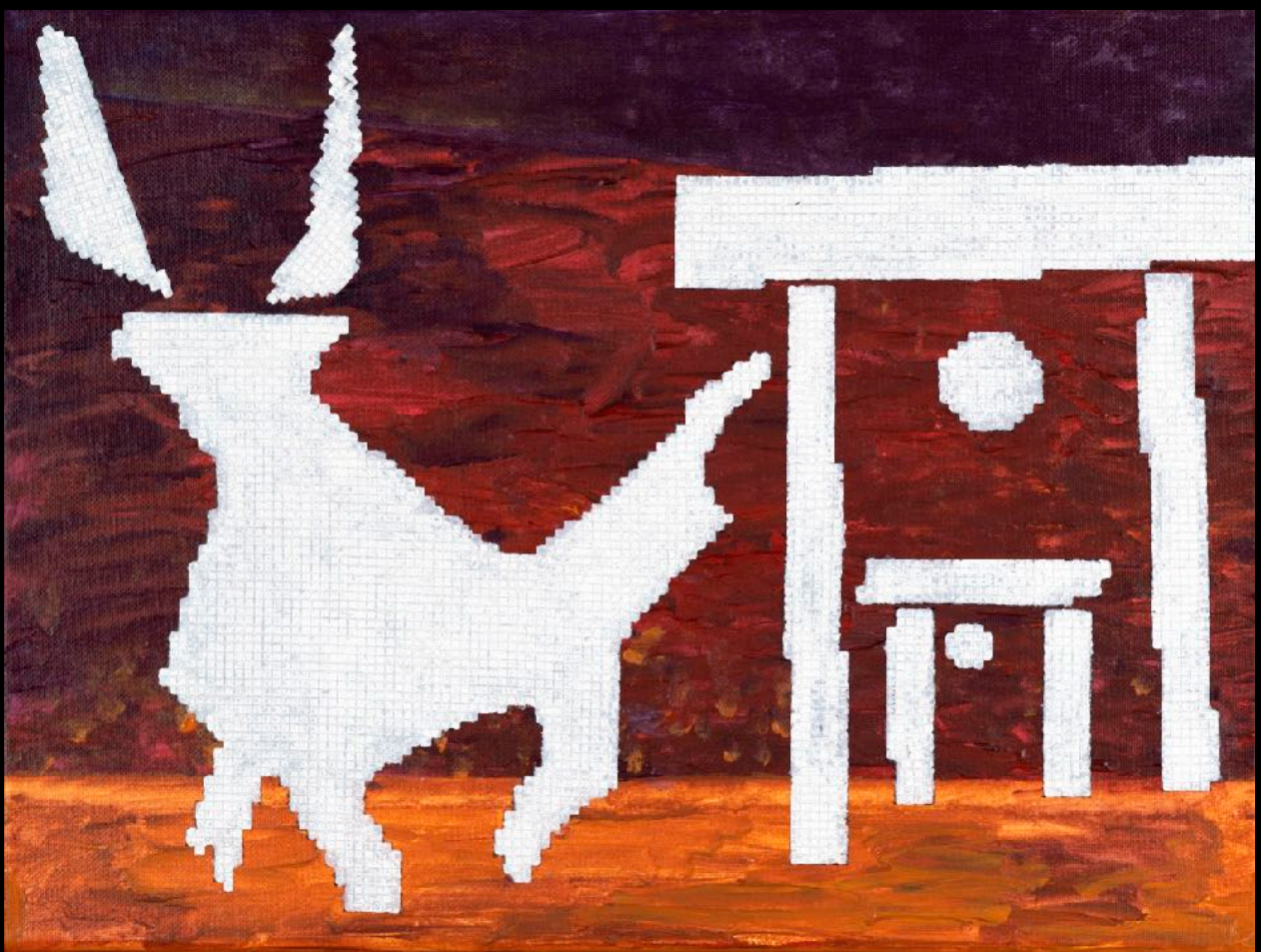
I spent today dissecting all of this in my mind.

I don’t think our natural surroundings were the fix.

For all of my life, I had tried to be what others wanted me to be, to be liked, to get along. I had become a consummate expert at it, honed to perfection.

I was a lot too successful. I strayed too far away from myself, from my center. There was the real me, and then, this other invention.

Now I will return to the world of Man, reasonably, but on my own terms.





terra, form

Shane Coppage & *Jerome Berglund*

anthropocene

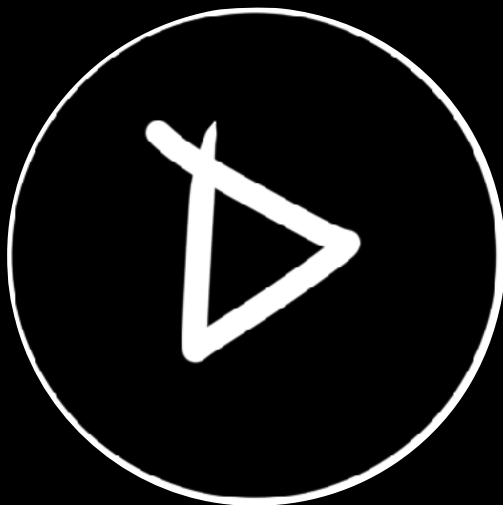
*leaf embedded*  
*piled snow*  
*melts slower*

circles in

cathedral of ice  
only for  
the moment

the sand

*come spring*  
*flakes of skin, pine needles*  
*anything else?*



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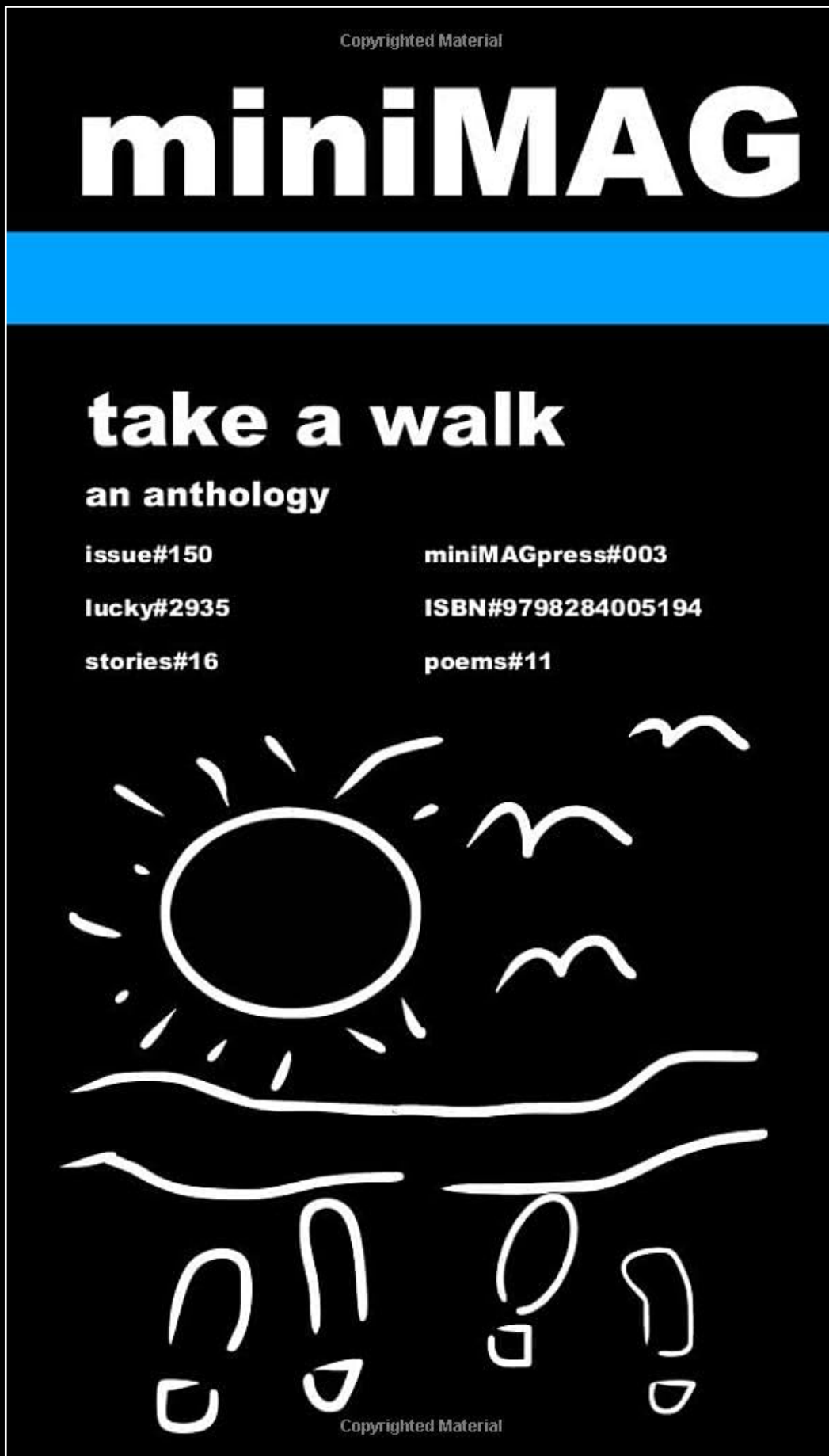
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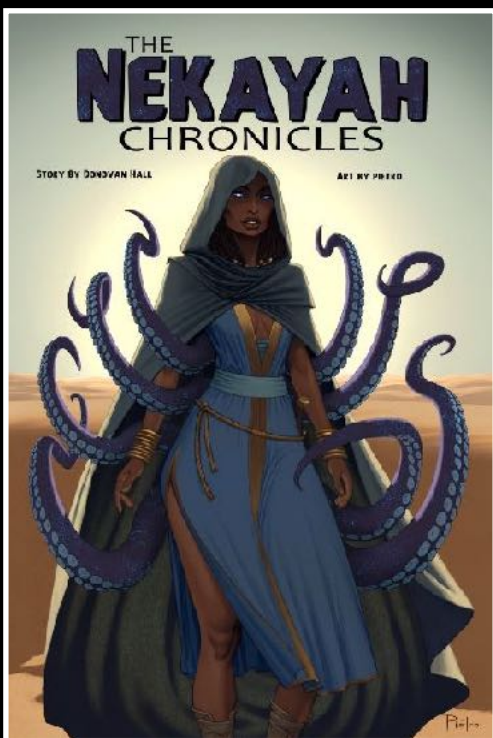
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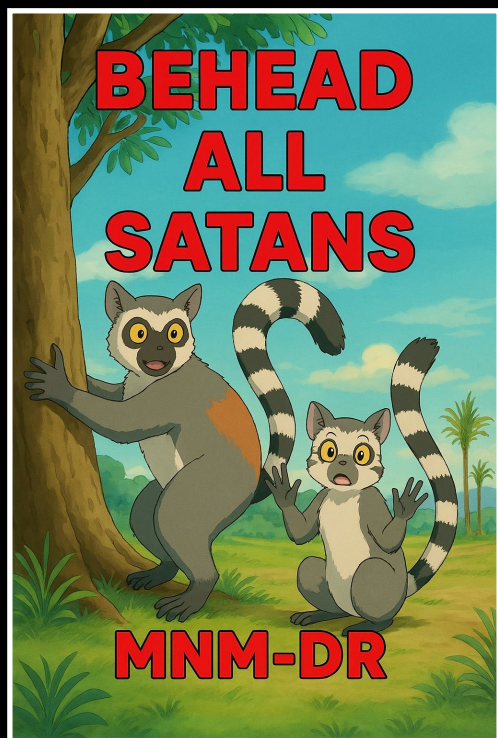
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